What Is, and to What End Do We Study, UNIVERSAL HISTORY?

TRANSLATED BY
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Gentlemen, it is a delightful and honorable commission for me to wander into the future at your sides, through a field which reveals so many objects of study to the thinking observer, such magnificent examples for the emulation of the active, worldly man, such important explanations for the philosopher, and such rich sources of most noble joy for everyone without exception—the grand and broad field of universal history. The sight of so many splendid young men gathered about me by their noble thirst for knowledge, and in whose midst some genius flourishes who will make himself felt in future ages, transforms my obligation into pleasure, but also makes me feel the weight and importance of this enterprise in its full force. The greater the gift I must bequeath upon you,—and what greater gift than truth has any man to give to man?—the more I must take caution,

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On May 26–27, 1789, Schiller delivered this lecture on Universal History at Jena University. It was his first lecture in his new position as Professor of History, a post which Goethe had arranged for him (though without compensation), in January of that year. The young Schiller's reputation was already such, that, for his first lecture, the classroom was filled to overflowing. A virtual march of hundreds of students occurred in the street, much to Schiller's amusement, to secure a larger classroom, before Schiller could begin.

that its value is not debased in my hands. The more lively and pure your spirit conceives in this happiest epoch of its activity, and the quicker your youthful passions glow, the greater the demand upon me to prevent this enthusiasm, which only truth has the right to awaken, from being wasted unworthily by fraud and deception.

The field of history is fecund and vastly encompassing; in its sphere lies the entire moral world. It accompanies us through all the conditions mankind has experienced, through all the shifting forms of opinion, through his folly and his wisdom, his deterioration and his ennoblement; history must give account of everything man has *taken* and *given*. There is none among you to whom history had nothing important to convey; however different the paths toward your future destinies, it somewhere binds them together; but one destiny you all share in the same way with one another, that which you brought with you into this world—to educate yourself as a human being—and history addresses itself to this human being.

But, gentlemen, before I can undertake to determine more exactly your expectations of this object of your diligence, and to explain its connection with the real purpose of your diverse studies, it were not superfluous for me to first reach agreement with you on that purpose of your studies. A preliminary clarification of this question, which seems appropriate and worthwhile enough to me, at the beginning of our future academic relationship, will enable me directly to draw your attention to the most dignified side of world history.

The course of studies which the scholar who feeds on bread alone sets himself, is very different from that of the philosophical mind. The former, who, for all his diligence, is interested merely in fulfilling the conditions under which he can perform a vocation and enjoy its advantages, who activates the powers of his mind only thereby to improve his material conditions and to satisfy a narrow-minded thirst for fame, such a person has no concern upon entering his academic career, more important than distinguishing most

carefully those sciences which he calls 'studies for bread,' from all the rest, which delight the mind for their own sake. Such a scholar believes, that all the time he devoted to these latter, he would have to divert from his future vocation, and this thievery he could never forgive himself. He will direct all of his diligence to the demands made upon him by the future master of his fate, and he will believe he has achieved everything once he has made himself capable of not fearing this authority. Once he has run his course and attained the goal of his desires, he dismisses the sciences which guided him, for why should he bother with them any longer? His greatest concern now is to display these accumulated treasures of his memory, and to take care, that their value not depreciate. Every extension of his bread-science upsets him, because it portends only more work, or it makes the past useless; every important innovation frightens him, because it shatters the old school form which he so laboriously adopted, it places him in danger of losing the entire effort of his preceding life.

Who rants more against reformers than the gaggle of bread-fed scholars? Who more holds up the progress of useful revolutions in the kingdom of knowledge than these very men? Every light radiated by a happy genius, in whichever science it be, makes their poverty apparent; their foils are bitterness, insidiousness, and desperation, for, in the school system they defend, they do battle at the same time for their entire existence. On that score, there is no more irreconcilable enemy, no more jealous official, no one more eager to denounce heresy than the bread-fed scholar. The less his knowledge rewards him *on its own account*, the more he devours acclaim thrown at him from the outside; he has but *one* standard for the work of the craftsman, as well as for the work of the mind—effort. Thus, one hears no one complain more about ingratitude than the bread-fed scholar; he seeks his rewards not in the treasures of his mind—his recompense he expects from the recognition of others, from positions of honor, from personal security. If he miscarries in this, who is more unhappy than the bread-

fed scholar? He has lived, worried, and worked in vain; he has sought in vain for truth, if for him this truth not transfer itself into gold, published praise, and princely favor.

Pitiful man, who, with the noblest of all tools, with science and art, desires and obtains nothing higher than the day-laborer with the worst of tools, who, in the kingdom of complete freedom, drags an enslaved soul around with him. Still more pitiful, however, is the young man of genius, whose natural, beautiful stride is led astray by harmful theories and models upon this sad detour, who was persuaded to collect ephemeral details for his future vocation, so wretchedly meticulous. His vocational science of patchwork will soon disgust him, desires will awaken in him which it cannot satisfy, his genius will revolt against his destiny. Everything he does appears to him but fragments, he sees no purpose to his work, but purposelessness he cannot bear. The tribulation, the triviality in his professional business presses him to the ground, because he cannot counter it with the joyful courage which acompanies only the enlightened understanding, only expected perfection. He feels secluded, torn away from the connectedness of things, since he has neglected to connect his activity to the grand whole of the world. Jurisprudence disrobes the jurist as soon as the glimmer of a better culture casts its light upon its nakedness, instead of his now striving to become a new creator of law, and to improve deficiencies now discovered out of his own inner wealth. The physician is estranged from his profession as soon as grave errors demonstrate to him the unreliability of his system; the theologian loses respect for his calling as soon as his faith in the infallibility of his system begins to totter.

How entirely differently the philosophical mind comports itself! As meticulously as the bread-fed scholar distinguishes his science from all others, the latter strives to extend the reach of his own, and to reestablish its bond with the others—*reestablish,* I say, for only the abstracting mind has set these boundaries, has sundered these sciences from one another. Where the bread-fed scholar severs, the philo-

sophical mind unites. He early convinced himself, that everything is intertwined in the field of understanding as well as in the material world, and his zealous drive for harmony cannot be satisfied with fragments of the whole. All his efforts are directed toward the perfection of his knowledge; his noble impatience cannot rest until all of his conceptions have ordered themselves into an organic whole, until he stands at the center of his art, his science, and until from this position outward he surveys its expanse with a contented look. New discoveries in the sphere of his activities, which cast the bread-fed scholar down, delight the philosophical mind. Perhaps they fill a gap which had still disfigured the growing whole of his conceptions, or they set the stone still missing in the edifice of his ideas, which then completes it. Even should these new discoveries leave it in ruins, a new chain of thoughts, a new natural phenomenon, a newly discovered law in the material world overthrow the entire edifice of his science, no matter: *He has always loved truth more than his system,* and he will gladly exchange the old, insufficient form for a new one, more beautiful. Indeed, if no blow from the outside shatters his edifice of ideas, he himself will be the first to tear it apart, discontented, to reestablish it more perfected. Through always new and more beautiful forms of thought, the philosophical mind strides forth to higher excellence, while the bread-fed scholar, in eternal stagnation of mind, guards over the barren monotony of his school-conceptions.

There is no fairer judge of the merits of others than the philosophical mind. Shrewd and imaginative enough to make use of every activity, he is also equitable enough to honor the creation of even the smallest contribution. All minds work for him—all minds work against the bread-fed scholar. The former knows how to transform everything around him, everything which happens and is thought, into his own possession—among thinking minds an intimate community of all goods of the mind is in effect; what is obtained in the kingdom of truth by one is won for all. The bread-fed scholar fences himself in against all his neighbors,

whom he jealously begrudges light and sun, and keeps worried watch over the dilapidated barrier which but weakly defends him against victorious reason. For everything the bread-fed scholar undertakes, he must borrow incentive and encouragement from others; the philosophical mind, in his diligence, finds in his subject matter itself his incentive and reward. How much more enthusiastically can he set about his work, how much more lively will his eagerness be, how much more tenacious his courage and his activity, because for him work rejuvenates itself through work. Even small things become grand under his creative hand, because he always has the grand objective, which they may serve, in view, while the bread-fed scholar sees even in great things only that which is petty. It is not *what* he does, but how he treats what he does, which distinguishes the philosophical mind. Wherever he may stand and work, he always stands at the center of the whole; and however far the object of his labors may draw him away from his other brothers, he is allied with them, and *near* them through a harmonically working understanding; he meets them where all enlightened minds find one another.

Should I now carry on further in this description, or may I hope, that you have already decided which of these two portraits I have held up to you here you will want to take as your model? Whether the study of universal history can be recommended to you, or whether you should leave it alone, depends upon the choice you have made between these two. My only concern is with the second portrait, for by endeavoring to make oneself useful to the first, science might depart too far from its higher, ultimate aim, and might purchase a small profit with a sacrifice too great.

If we are agreed upon the point of view from which the value of science should be determined, I can now draw closer to the conception of universal history itself, the topic of today's lecture.

The discoveries which our European mariners have made in distant oceans and on remote coastlines, present us a spectacle as constructive as it is entertaining. They

show us tribes which surround us at the most diverse levels of culture, like children of different ages gathered around an adult, reminding him by their example of what he used to be, and where he started from. A wise hand seems to have preserved these raw tribes for us down to our times, where we would be advanced enough in our own culture to make fruitful application of this discovery upon ourselves, and to restore out of this mirror the forgotten origin of our species. But how shaming and sad is the picture these people give us of our childhood! And yet the level at which we see them is not even the first. Mankind began even more contemptuously. Those we study today we already find as nations, as political bodies: But mankind first had to elevate itself by an extraordinary effort, to political society.

Now what do these travellers tell us about these savages? They found some without any knowledge of the most indispensable skills, without iron, without the plow, some even without the possession of fire. Some still wrestled with wild beasts for food and dwelling, among many language had been scarcely elevated from animal sounds to understandable signs. In some places, there was not even the simple bond of *marriage*, as yet no knowledge of property, and in others the flaccid soul was not even able to retain an experience which repeats itself every day; one saw the savage carelessly relinquish the bed on which he slept, because it did not occur to him, that he would sleep again tomorrow. War, however, was with them all, and the flesh of the vanquished enemy was not seldom the prize of victory. Among others, acquainted with various leisures of life, who had already achieved a higher level of culture, slavery and despotism presented us a dreadful picture of them. Once we find a tyrant in Africa trading his subjects for a gulp of brandy; another time they would be slaughtered on his grave to serve him in the underworld. Where once pious simplicity prostrates itself to a ridiculous fetish, another time it is to a terrible monster; mankind portrays himself in his gods. Where over there we see denigrating slavery, stupidity, and superstition bow him down, yet another time

we see him utterly miserable on the other extreme of lawless freedom. Always armed for attack and defense, startled by every noise, the savage strains his cautious ear into the desert; everything new is the *enemy,* and woe to the stranger whom a storm has cast upon the coast! No hospitable hearth will smoke for him, no sweet hospitality comfort him. But even where mankind has elevated itself from hostile solitude to community, from privation to luxury, from fear to joy—how bizarre and atrocious he seems to our eyes! His crude taste seeks joy in stupor, beauty in distortion, glory in exaggeration; even his virtue awakens horror in us, and what he calls his bliss can only arouse our disgust and pity. So were *we.* Caesar and Tacitus found us not much better eighteen hundred years ago. What are we now?—Let me linger for a moment at this epoch in which we are now living, at this present shape of the world we inhabit.

Human diligence has cultivated it and subdued the resisting land through persistence and skill. In one part of the world we see, that mankind redeemed the land from the sea, somewhere else he opened rivers into the arid land. Mankind has intermingled the regions and the seasons, and has toughened the weak plants of the Orient to his own harsh climate. As he brought Europe to the West Indies and the South Seas, so he also let Asia arise in Europe. A merrier sky now laughs above Germany's forests, which the powerful hand of man tore open to the rays of sunshine, and in the waves of the Rhine are mirrored Asia's grapevines. Populous towns arise on its banks, which swarm with vigorous life of pleasure and work. Here we find a man secure in peaceful possession of his acquisitions among millions of others, whom previously a single neighbor had robbed of his slumbers. The equality he lost upon entering the community, he regained through wise laws. He escaped from the blind constraint of pure chance and poverty under the more gentle constraint of treaties, and surrendered the liberty of the beast of prey to redeem the more noble freedom of the human being. Prevailing need compels him no longer to the plowshare, no enemy any longer demands of

him, that he leave his plow to defend home and fatherland on the battlefield. With the arm of the husbandman he fills his barns, with the weapons of a warrior he protects his territory. The law keeps watch over his property—and that invaluable right remains for him to decide for himself what his duty is.

How many creations of art, how many wonders of diligence, what light in all fields of knowledge, since man no longer consumes his energies in pitiful self-defense, since it has been placed at his discretion to reconcile himself with need, which he ought never fully to escape; since he has obtained the valuable privilege to command freely over his capabilities, and to follow the call of his genius! What lively activity everywhere, since desires multiplied lent new wings to inventive genius and opened new spheres to his diligence.—The boundaries are breached which isolated states and nations in hostile egoism. All thinking minds are now bound together by the bond of world-citizenry, and all the light of the century can now illuminate the spirit of a new Galileo and Erasmus.

Since the time when the laws descended to the weakness of man, man, too, accommodated to the laws. With them he has become gentle, just as he ran wild when they were wild; barbaric crimes follow their barbaric punishment gradually into oblivion. A great step toward ennoblement has taken place, so that the laws are virtuous, although mankind still is not. Where duties enforced upon mankind are relaxed, morality takes command of him. Whom no punishment terrifies and no conscience curbs, is now held within bounds by laws of decency and honor.

It is true, that some barbaric remnants of the former age have penetrated into our own, the progeny of accident and violence, which the Age of Reason should not perpetuate. But how much which is useful has the understanding of mankind also given to this barbaric legacy of the ancient and Middle Ages. How harmless, yes—how useful—it has often made that which it could not yet dare to overturn! Upon the rough terrain of feudal anarchy, Germany estab-

lished the system of its political and clerical freedom. The silhouette of the Roman Emperor presented on this side of the Apennines serves the world infinitely better than its dreadful archetype in ancient Rome, for it holds together a useful system of states through concord: The former had suppressed the most active forces of mankind in slavish uniformity. Even our religion, so much distorted at the hands of the faithless, from which it has been handed down to us—who can deny the ennobling influence of a better philosophy in it? From Leibnizes and Lockes, the *dogma* and *morality* of Christianity gained in the same way the brush of a Raphael and Correggio bequeathed to sacred history.

Finally, our nations: With what intensity, with what art they are intertwined with each other! How much more durably fraternal through the charitable force of need, than in earlier times through the most ceremonious treaties! The peace is now guarded by a permanently bridled war, and the self-love of one nation makes it the guardian over the prosperity of the other. The European community of states appears to be transformed into a great family. The family members may treat each other with hostility, but hopefully no longer tear each other limb from limb.

What very different pictures! Who would suspect in the refined European of the eighteenth century only an advanced brother of the modern Canadian, or the ancient Celt? All these skills, artistic impulses, experiences, and all these creations of reason, were implanted and developed in mankind during the span of a few thousand years, all these wonders of art, these grand achievements of diligence evoked from mankind. What awakened them to life, what enticed them forth? Through which conditions did man wander until he ascended from *one* extreme, from the unsociable troglodyte, to the ingenious thinker, the cultured man of the world? Universal world history gives the answer to this question.

These same people present themselves on this same tract of land so immeasurably different when we view them

in different periods of time. No less striking is the difference offered us by the contemporary generation in different countries. What a multitude of customs, constitutions, and manners! What a rapid alternation between darkness and light, between anarchy and order, bliss and misery, even when we meet people only in this small part of the world, Europe! Free at the Thames, and for this freedom his own debtor; here, unconquerable between the Alps, somewhere else invincible between his artificial rivers and swamps. At the River Vistula, without energy and miserable in his discord; on the other side of the Pyrenees, without energy and miserable in his calmness. Wealthy and blessed in Amsterdam without harvest; poor and unhappy in the unused paradise of the Ebro. Here two distant nations, separated by an ocean, transformed into neighbors by force of necessity, diligence of arts, and political bonds; there are adjacent residents of *one* river immeasurably distant in their different liturgies! What led Spain's power across the Atlantic Ocean into the heart of America, and not even across the Tajo and Guadiana? What preserved so many thrones in Italy and Germany, and in France let all, except *one*, disappear? Universal history solves this question.

Even that *we* found ourselves together here at this moment, found ourselves together with this degree of national culture, with this language, these manners, these civil benefits, this degree of freedom of conscience, is the result perhaps of all previous events in the world: The *entirety* of world history, at least, were necessary to explain this single moment. For us to have met here as Christians, this religion had to be prepared by countless revolutions, had to go forth from Judaism, had to have found the Roman state exactly as it found it, to spread in a rapid and victorious course over the world, and to ascend finally even the throne of the Caesars. Our raw forefathers in the Thuringian forests had to have been defeated by the superior strength of the Franks in order to adopt their religion. Through its own increasing wealth, through the ignorance of the people, and through the weakness of their rulers, the clergy had to have been

tempted and favored to misuse its reputation, and to transform its silent *power over the conscience* into a secular sword. For us to have assembled here as Protestant Christians, the hierarchy had to have poured out all its atrocities upon the human species in a Gregory and Innocent, so that the rampant depravity of moral standards and the crying scandal of spiritual despotism could embolden an intrepid Augustinian monk to give the signal for the revolt, and to snatch half of Europe away from the Roman hierarchy. For this to have happened, the weapons of our princes had to wrest a religious peace from Charles V; a Gustavus Adolphus had to have avenged the breach of this peace, and establish a new, universal peace for centuries. Cities in Italy and Germany had to have risen up to open their gates to industry, break the chains of serfdom, wrest the scepter out of the hands of ignorant tyrants, and gain respect for themselves through a militant Hanseatic League, in order that trade and commerce should flourish, and superfluity to have called forth the arts of joy, so that the nation should have honored the useful husbandman, and a long-lasting happiness for mankind should have ripened in the beneficent middle class, the creator of our entire culture. Germany's emperors had to have debilitated themselves in centuries of battles with the popes, with their vassals, with jealous neighbors; Europe had to have unloaded its dangerous abundance in the graves of Asia, and the defiant feudal aristocracy had to have bled its indignant rebellious spirit to death in a murderous law of the fist, Roman campaigns and crusades, so that confused chaos could sort itself out, and the contending powers of the state rest in a blessed equilibrium, and from thence is our present leisure the reward. For our mind to have wrested itself free of the ignorance in which spiritual and secular compulsion held it enchained, the long-suppressed germ of scholarship had to have burst forth again among its most enraged persecutors, and an Al Mamun had to have paid the spoils to the sciences, which an Omar had extorted from them. The unbearable misery of barbarism had to have driven our ancestors forth

from the bloody *judgments of God* and into human courts of law, devastating plagues had to have called medicine run astray back to the study of nature, the idleness of the monks had to have prepared from a distance a substitute for the evil which their works had created, and profane industry in the monasteries had to have preserved the ruined remains of the Augustinian age until the time of the art of printing had arrived. The depressed spirit of the Nordic barbarian had to have uplifted itself to Greek and Roman models, and erudition had to have concluded an alliance with the Muses and Graces, should it ever find a way to the heart and deserve the name of sculptor of man.—But, had Greece given birth to a Thucydides, a Plato, an Aristotle, had Rome given birth to a Horace, a Cicero, a Virgil and Livy, were these two nations not to have ascended to those heights of political wealth to which they indeed attained? In a word, if their *entire history* had not preceded them? How many inventions, discoveries, state and church revolutions had to *conspire* to lend growth and dissemination to these new, still tender sprouts of science and art! How many wars had to be waged, how many alliances concluded, sundered, and become newly concluded to finally bring Europe to the principle of peace, which alone grants nations, as well as their citizens, to direct their attention to themselves, and to join their energies to a reasonable purpose!

Even in the most everyday activities of civil life, we cannot avoid becoming indebted to centuries past; the most diverse periods of mankind contribute to our culture in the same way as the most remote regions of the world contribute to our luxury. The clothes we wear, the spices in our food, and the price for which we buy them, many of our strongest medicines, and also many new tools of our destruction—do they not presuppose a Columbus who discovered America, a Vasco da Gama who circumnavigated the tip of Africa?

There is thus a long chain of events pulling us from the present moment aloft toward the beginning of the human species, the which intertwine as cause and effect. Only the infinite understanding can survey these events wholly and

completely; for man, narrower limitations are set. *I.* Countless of these events have either found no human witness or observer, or they have been preserved by no signs. Among these are all those which have preceded the human species itself, and the invention of letters. The source of all history is tradition, and the organ of tradition is speech. The entire epoch *prior to speech,* however momentous it may have been for the world, is lost to world history. *II.* But after speech was invented, through it the possibility existed to express things which occurred, and to communicate further, so in the beginning, this reporting occurred over the insecure and changeable way of myths. From mouth to mouth, such an event was transmitted over a long succession of generations, and since it passed through media which are changed, and do change, it too necessarily suffered these changes. Living tradition, or the myth by word of mouth, is thus a highly unreliable source for history; all events prior to the use of the written word, therefore, are as good as lost to world history. *III.* But the written word itself is not eternal, either; countless monuments of ancient ages have been destroyed by time and accidents, and only a few ruins have been preserved from the ancient world into the time of the art of printing. Most of them, by and large, are lost to world history, together with the information they should have provided us. *IV.* Among the few monuments, finally, which time has spared, the larger number has been disfigured by *passion,* by *lack of judgment,* and often even by the *genius* of those who describe them, and have been rendered unrecognizable. Our mistrust awakens at the oldest of historic monuments, and it does not leave us even at the chronicles of the present day. If we hear the testimonies of an event which happened only today, and among people with whom we live, and in the town we inhabit, and we have difficulty making the truth out of their contradictory reports, what courage can we summon up for nations and times more distant from us on account of the strangeness of their customs than the distance in time of thousands of years? The small sum of events remaining after all these

deductions have been made is the substance of history in its broadest understanding. Now, what, and how much, of this substance of history belongs to Universal History?

Out of the entire sum of these events, the universal historian selects those which have had an essential, irrefutable, and easily ascertainable influence upon the contemporary form of the world, and on the conditions of the generations now living. It is the relationship of an historical fact to the *present* constitution of the world, therefore, which must be seen in order to assemble material for world history. World history thus proceeds from a principle, which is exactly contrary to the beginning of the world. The real succession of events descends from the origin of objects down to their most recent ordering; the universal historian ascends from the most recent world situation, upwards toward the origin of things. When he ascends from the current year and century in thoughts to the next preceding, and takes note of those among the events presented to him containing the explanation for the succeeding years and centuries, when he has continued this process stepwise up to the beginning—not of the world, for to that place there is no guide—but to the beginning of the monuments, then he decides to retrace his steps on the path thus prepared, and to descend, unhindered and with light steps, with the guide of those noted facts, from the beginning of the monuments down to the most recent age. That is the world history we have, and which will be presented to you.

Because world history depends on the wealth and poverty of sources, there must arise as many gaps in world history as there exist empty passages in written tradition. However uniformly, necessarily, and certainly the changes in the world develop out of each other, they will appear disconnected and accidentally connected to each other in history. Therefore, between the course of the world and the course of world history, a remarkable disparity is evident. One might compare the former with an uninterrupted, continually flowing stream, from which, however, only here and there will a wave be illuminated in world history. Since

it can also easily happen, that the relationship of a distant world event to the circumstances of the present year appears to us sooner than its connection with events which preceded it, or were contemporary, it is thus also unavoidable, that the events which are most precisely connected with the most recent age not infrequently seem to be isolated in the age to which they originally belong. A fact of this kind, for example, would be the origin of Christianity, and particularly of Christian ethics. The Christian religion made such diverse contributions to the form of our present world, that its appearance becomes the most important fact for world history: But neither in the time in which it appeared, nor in the population in which it arose, does there lie a satisfactory basis for explaining its appearance—beause we lack the sources.

As such, our world history would never become anything but an aggregation of fragments, and would never deserve the name of a science. But now the philosophical understanding comes to its aid, and while it binds these fragments together with artificial connections, it elevates the aggregate to a system, to a reasonably connected whole. Its authority for this lies in the uniformity and invariant unity of the laws of nature and of the human soul, which unity is the reason, that the events of most distant antiquity return in the most recent times under the coincidence of similar circumstances from the outside, as also the reason, that, therefore, from events most recent, lying within the field of our observation, a conclusion can be drawn and some light shed, in hindsight, on events which faded away in prehistoric times. The method of drawing conclusions by analogies is as powerful an aid in history, as everywhere else, but it must be justified by an important purpose, and must be exercised with as much circumspection as judgment.

The philosophical mind cannot dwell on the material of world history long, until a new impulse striving for harmony becomes active in him, one which irresistibly stimulates

him to assimilate everything around him into his rational nature, and to raise every phenomenon he sees to its highest recognizable effect, to *thought*. The more often, and the more successfully he thus repeats this attempt to connect the past to the present, the more he is inspired to connect that, as *means* and *intent*, which he sees to be interlocked as *cause* and *effect*. One phenomenon after the other begins to shed blind caprice, lawless freedom, and to add itself as a well-fitting link to an harmonious whole (which, admittedly, exists only in his imagination). Soon he finds it difficult to persuade himself, that the succession of phenomena, which achieved so much regularity and the quality of being intended in his imagination, does not have these qualities in reality; he finds it difficult to surrender that to the blind rule of necessity, which had begun to take on such vivid form under the borrowed light of the understanding. He thus takes this harmony from out of himself, and plants it outside of himself into the order of things, i.e., he brings a reasonable purpose into the course of the world, and a teleological principle into *world history*. With this principle he wanders once more through world history, and holds it up, testing it against each phenomenon which this grand theater presents him. He sees it *confirmed* by a thousand concurring facts, and disproved by just as many others; but as long as important links are missing in the course of changes in the world, as long as destiny withholds the final explanations about so many events, he declares this question to be undecided, and that opinion will triumph, which is able to offer the greater satisfaction to the mind, and to the heart, the greater bliss.

There is probably no need to recall, that a world history according to the latter plan can be expected only in the most recent times. A precipitous application of this grand standard could easily lead the historian into the temptation to do violence to events, and thus to move more and more away from this bright epoch of world history, in the desire to accelerate it. But attention cannot be called too early to

this illuminated, and yet so neglected side of world history, that through which it attaches itself to the highest object of all human endeavors. Already the cursory glance in this regard, even if the goal is merely possible, must lend the diligence of the researcher an invigorating incentive, and sweet recreation. Even the smallest of efforts will be important for him when he sees himelf on the way, or when he guides a successor on the way toward solving the problem of the ordering of the world, and to meet the Supreme Mind in His most beautiful effect.

And, treated this way, gentlemen, the study of world history will give you an attractive as well as useful occupation. It will enkindle light in your mind, and a charitable enthusiasm in your heart. It will cure your mind of the common and narrow view of moral matters, and while it displays the grand picture of the times and nations before your eyes, it will improve upon the rash decisions of the moment, and the limited judgments of egoism. While it accustoms a person to connect himself with the entirety of what is past, and to rush on with his conclusions into the far future, so it veils the boundary between birth and death which circumscribes human life so narrowly and so oppressively, and it thus extends his brief existence, by optical illusion, into an infinite space, and, unnoticed, leads the individual over into the species.

Man changes himself, and flees the stage; his opinions change and flee with him: History alone remains incessantly on the scene, an immortal citizen of all nations and all times. Like the Homeric Zeus, it looks with an equally bright view down upon the bloody work of war, and upon peaceful nations which innocently feed themselves from the milk of their herds. However lawlessly the freedom of man may seem to deal with the contest, it calmly gazes upon the confused play, for its far-reaching view already discovered in the distant future the way where this lawlessly roaming freedom will be guided by the reins of necessity. What history keeps secret from the reproachful conscience of a Gregory and a Cromwell, it rushes to proclaim to mankind:

"The egoistic man may indeed pursue baser ends, but he unconsciously promotes splendid ones."

No false gleam will blind history, no prejudice of the times will seduce it, because it experiences the final destiny of all things. In the eyes of history, everything has endured an equally long time; it holds the rewarded olive garland fresh, and destroys the obelisk erected by vanity. By dissecting the fine mechanism by which the silent hand of nature methodically develops the powers of mankind from the very beginning of the world, and while it precisely indicates in each period of time what has been achieved on behalf of this great plan of nature, at the same time it restores the true standard of happiness and merit which prevailing delusion distorted in a different way in every century. History cures us of exaggerated admiration for antiquity and childish longing for times past; and while it draws our attention to our own possession, it does not let us wish back the praised golden ages of Alexander and Augustus.

All preceding ages, without knowing it or aiming at it, have striven to bring about our human century. Ours are all the treasures which diligence and genius, reason and experience, have finally brought home in the long age of the world. Only from history will you learn to set a value on the goods from which habit and unchallenged possession so easily deprive our gratitude; priceless, precious goods, upon which the blood of the best and the most noble clings, goods which had to be won by the hard work of so many generations! And who among you, in whom a bright spirit is conjugated with a feeling heart, could bear this high obligation in mind, without a silent wish being aroused in him to pay that debt to coming generations which he can no longer discharge to those past? A noble desire must glow in us to also make a contribution out of *our means* to this rich bequest of truth, morality, and freedom which we received from the world past, and which we must surrender once more, richly enlarged, to the world to come, and, in this eternal chain which winds itself through all human generations, to make firm our ephemeral existence. How-

ever different the destinies may be which await you in society, all of you can contribute something to this! A path toward immortality has been opened up to every achievement, to the true immortality, I mean, where the deed lives and rushes onward, even if the name of the author should remain behind.